Lesson 11: Question Words

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Link to the video lesson version: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vjFGAzXdpg0&t=13s

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📍 Learning Goals

❖ Understand and use Japanese question words (where, what, who, when, how, why) in various sentence structures.
❖ Familiarize yourself with the verbs ある and いる, and understand their use in indicating the existence of something in a location.
❖ Learn to use the words この, その, and あの correctly

Where?

The direct translation of "Where" is どこ.

Formula
💡 Thing + は + どこ + ですか
　　Where is the [thing]?

📌 *Note: In Japanese you do not necessarily need a question mark, since か marks the sentence as a question.*

Examples
1. トイレはどこですか
Where is the bathroom?

2. 日本語学校の初心者クラスはどこですか
にほんごがっこうのしょしんしゃクラスはどこですか
Where is the beginner class of Japanese School?

Answer Formula
💡 Thing + は + where it is + です

Examples

1. トイレはそっちです
   The toilet is there

2. トイレは2階(にかい)です
   The toilet is on the second floor

❓ Question ❓

Translate the following questions into Japanese AND answer them in Japanese!

1. Where are your parents? (you can leave "your" away in your translation)
2. Where is the mall? (tip, name a city)

<u>**Vocab**</u>
両親(りょうしん)parents
モール mall

⭕Answer⭕

Highlight the area above to see the answer

ある **and** いる

Sometimes using this type of sentence causes confusion:

1. 犬は公園です。
   いぬはこうえんです
   The dog is a park.

If someone asks you the location, you can assume the sentence means the dog is in the park, but without previous context it can sound like the dog is a park.

To specify we're talking about the existence of something in a location there are two verbs to use.

- ❖ いる（います）- only using for animate things
- ❖ ある （あります）- only used for inanimate things

📌 *We use the particle に with いる and ある to mark the location*
📌 *If you're saying something exists without specifying location you usually use が*
📌 *Depending on context いる/ある can mean "is" or "I have"*

Formula
💡 Place/object/person + は + (location) +　に　+ いる/ある
💡 Place/object/person + が + いる/ある

Examples
1. 犬は公園にいます
   The dog is in the park
   (A dog is a living thing so uses いる)

2. ボールはにわにある
   The ball is in the garden
   (A ball is a non living thing so uses ある)

3. ボールがあります
   There is a ball

4. 妹がいます
   いもうとがいます
   I have a younger sister

❓ Question ❓
Translate
1. 図書館はどこにありますか
2. I have an entrance exam next month

Vocab
図書館(としょかん)Library
来月(らいげつ) next month

入学(にゅうがく) entrance
試験(しけん) exam

⭕ **Answer** ⭕

Highlight the area above to see the answer

What?

The direct translation for "what" is なに.

Formula
💡 Object + は + なんですか

📌 なにですか *is incorrect*

Examples
1. これはなんですか

   What is this?

2. このお菓子はなんですか
   このおかしはなんですか
   What is this candy?

この, その, あの

In the previous example これ and この were used both to mean "this" (close to speaker). これ **cannot come directly in front of a noun**, and この **has to come directly in front of a noun**. This rule also applies to the words それ/その ("that" close to listener, far from speaker) and あれ/あの ("that" far from both speaker and listener).
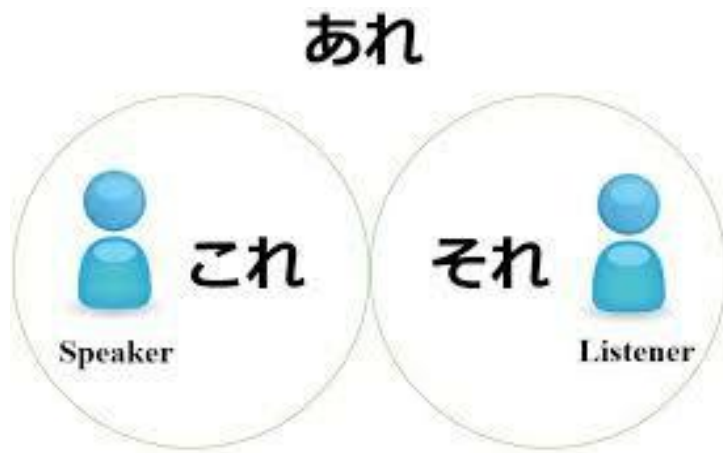
For example:
- ❖ **この**お菓子です is correct, but **これ**お菓子です is incorrect.
- ❖ **これ**は犬です is correct, but **この**は犬です is incorrect.

📌 **この** *and* **その** *come in various forms to express different meanings and formalities.* They are a little bit too much to explain within this lesson, so you are asked to study it on your own time. This blog by Nya-san explains it very well:

https://aminoapps.com/c/japaneseschool/page/blog/kosoado-words-kosoadoyan-xie/pXqe_LwLtQuEYjBpdZNqgENPPZQ7jo7kmJb

The grammar explained in this blog is part of the curriculum. Studying it will be part of the homework for this week. Yes, it will be on the final exam.

❓ **Question** ❓
Translate
1. あの高い山何ですか
2. What do you do for a living? (What is your job)

Vocab
高い(たかい)high/tall
山(やま)mountain
仕事(しごと)job/work

⭕ **Answer** ⭕

Highlight the space above to see the answer

Who?

The direct translation for who is 誰（だれ）.

Formula
💡 Person + は + だれ + ですか

Examples

1. あの人は誰ですか
   Who is that person?

When?

The direct translation for when is いつ.

Formula
💡 Event + は + いつ + ですか。
💡 Event + は + いつ + masu verb + か。

Examples

1. 祭りはいつですか
   まつりはいつですか
   When is the festival?

2. 祭りはいつ始まりますか
   まつりはいつはじまりますか
   When does the festival start?

3. レッスンはいつ終わりますか
   レッスンはいつおわりますか
   When does the lesson end?

Translate

1. いつそこへ行きましたか
2. 好きな歌手は誰ですか

Vocab

好き(すき) like (favourite)
歌手(かしゅ) singer

⭕ **Answer** ⭕

Highlight the space above to see the answer

How?

There are a lot of ways of asking how in Japanese. The direct translation of how is どう. But for the sake of this lesson, just imagine yourself as a tourist in Japan. You would only need the most basic pattern to ask how.

Formula
💡 Subject + は + どう + ですか

Examples

1. その茶はどうですか
   そのちゃはどうですか
   How is that tea?

2. さいたまさんはどうですか
   How is Mr. Saitama?

3. 昨日(きのう)のパーティーはどうでしたか
   きのうのパーティーはどうでしたか
   How was yesterday's party?

Why?

The pattern to asking why varies but for the sake of this lesson, here is the most basic pattern.

Formula

💡 なんで + sentence/ phrase + ですか/ますか

Examples

1. なんでさいたまさんがここにいますか
   Why is Mr. Saitama here?

2. なんでイベントが始まりませんでしたか
   なんでイベントがはじまりませんでしたか
   Why didn't the event start?

📌 *Note: this lesson used many sentence structures with です for the W5H1 question words. But they can also be used in sentences that express actions with actual verbs. You saw an example of that above. The sentence structure when using a verb is the same as when using です, just replace です with a verb of your choice!*

❓ Question ❓

Translate the following questions into Japanese, then answer them in Japanese!

1. Where did you lose your pen?
2. Why do you like dogs?
3. What do you draw?

"You" does not need to be translated in any of those (it is implied).

Vocab
ペン = pen
なくす= to lose
書く（かく）= to draw; to write

⭕ Answer ⭕

Highlight the area above to see the answer

📌 Summary

- ❖ **Where (どこ)**: Sentence structure is "Thing + は + どこ + ですか". The answer uses the structure "Thing + は + where it is + です".
- ❖ **ある and いる**: Verbs used to indicate the existence of something in a location. いる is used for living things, and ある is used for non-living things.
- ❖ **What (なん)**: Sentence structure is "Object + は + なんですか".
- ❖ **これ, それ, あれ**: These words mean "this", "that (near the listener)", and "that (away from both speaker and listener)" respectively. These **cannot** come directly in front of a noun.
- ❖ **この, その, あの**: These words mean "this", "that (near the listener)", and "that (away from both speaker and listener)" respectively. These **must** come directly in front of a noun.
- ❖ **Who (だれ)**: Sentence structure is "Person + は + だれ + ですか".
- ❖ **When (いつ)**: Sentence structure is "Event + は + いつ + ですか" or "Event + は + いつ + masu verb + か".
- ❖ **How (どう)**: Sentence structure is "Subject + は + どう + ですか".
- ❖ **Why (なんで)**: Sentence structure is "なんで + sentence/ phrase + ですか/ますか".

📝 Homework

1. Read this blog:
   <https://aminoapps.com/c/japaneseschool/page/blog/kosoado-words-kosoadoyan-xie/pXqe_LwLtQuEYjBpdZNqgENPPZQ7jo7kmJb>
2. Do this worksheet:
   <https://docs.google.com/document/d/1PLtJpfBRf6Evo0-8XuzT1mfB9lwkZ2inFSsar2E9jtQ/edit?usp=drivesdk>

📝 Extra Resources

- ❖ Tofugu Question Words in Depth:
  <https://www.tofugu.com/japanese-grammar/question-words/>
- ❖ Tofugu ある、いる: <https://www.tofugu.com/japanese-grammar/iru-aru/>
- ❖ Tofugu これ、それ、あれ、etc:
  <https://www.tofugu.com/japanese-grammar/kore-sore-are-dore/>
- ❖ Coto Academy Question Words Video: <https://youtu.be/5fr-qdEH2T8>